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DEFENCE

Of the Two

LETTERS

TO

Mr. Tong, } Mr. Robinson, &
Mr. Smith, } Mr. Reynolds,

AGAINST

*Mr. FANCOURT'S
Enthusiasm Retorted.*

By THOMAS MORGAN.

L O N D O N;

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DEFENCE

Of the Two

LETTERS

Mr. R. A. Smith &

Mr. G. Smith



Y. L. Smith

London

1850

Sixpence



A
D E F E N C E
 Of the Two
L E T T E R S, &c.



THE Reverend Mr. *Samuel Fancourt*, after Three Years Silence in the Controversy betwixt him and me relating to the Four LONDON MINISTERS, has now at length, I suppose, convinced the World, That while he said nothing, he did not spare for Thinking. I shall not anticipate the Reader's Judgment in the Matter; but proceed directly, as briefly and clearly as I can, to settle the remaining Part of the Account between Mr. *Fancourt* and myself, as it depends entirely upon the declared Principles, and well-known Conduct of these *Four Ministers*.

AFTER some very great and Learned Divines of the *Church of England*, had ventured to recede from the common *Doctrine* or rather *common Set of Words*, which Men had been suppos'd to agree in with respect to the

HOLY TRINITY, these Gentlemen thought fit to interpose, in order to rescue the People of *their Denomination*, their *old Friends* and *Acquaintance* from an Error which they apprehended of fatal Consequence; and this at a Time when no Dissenting Minister of any one Congregation in *England*, that I know of, had declar'd himself against their common *verbal Belief*. The Controversy then lay wholly in the Establish'd Church; and there only it might have been thoroughly and finally debated, without the least Trouble or Molestation to the Dissenters, if these Ministers could have vouchsafed us that Favour; but this they could not, it seems, in Point of Conscience grant us, and therefore like true Guardians of the *Faith once delivered to the Saints*, they publish a Book consisting for the most Part of a Collection of *human Creeds*, and a few Quotations out of Scriptures, without taking the least Notice of what had been so often urg'd against the Sense they would seem to understand them in. In this Book they lay down what they take to be of the Last Consequence concerning the TRINITY, and insist upon it as such in Point of Salvation and Christian Communion, without rendring it either intelligible in itself, or shewing how it can possibly consist with the Truth of the Christian Revelation.

I, who had hitherto been a silent and peaceable Spectator only of what had been said and done in the World, thought myself now oblig'd to expose the Weakness and Absurdity of such a Conduct, with the fatal and mischievous Consequences of the Principle they had advanc'd. In the mean while, I did not pretend to determine any thing concerning the Persons themselves with respect to the Vincibility

cibility or Invincibility of their Error, or how far they might be innocent or guilty, clear'd or condemn'd *in Foro Conscientiæ*. I look'd upon this as a Point uncapable of an human Decision, and such as must be left to the final Determination of CHRIST himself. But Mr. *Fancourt* would represent me as charging the Brethren with great Impiety and moral Wickedness, as if I had imputed all the fatal Consequences, and the whole Guilt and Condemnation of their false Principles to the Persons themselves; than which he could have devised nothing more groundless, nor more unrighteous; and yet his Declamations and Outcries about this, make up a very considerable Part of his Book.

To condemn Mens Persons together with their Principles, has been ever the Manner of blind Bigots, and flaming Zealots, though nothing can be more contrary to the Nature, Spirit and Genius of Christianity. When Men are imperious and impatient of Contradiction, they will reckon themselves decry'd, if they are not ador'd, and he who presumes to differ from them, or to question any of their Decisions, immediately becomes their Executioner: But if Mr. *Fancourt*, and those of his Way, cannot differ from other Christians in Matters of dark and doubtful Speculation and Belief, without charging their Adversaries with Insincerity and moral Wickedness, I am heartily sorry for them, and can only wish them less Infallibility, and more Charity. However, I hope, the impartial World will observe and consider it, if Mr. *Fancourt* will not, That 'tis not Men, but Doctrines, not Persons, but Principles, that I am concern'd with, and arguing against.

THE

THE main Principle which the *Four Ministers* have advanc'd as the very Substance of the *Trinitarian* Doctrine, and the Centre of Christian Unity, Peace, and Communion, is this ; That *these Three*, the FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, and not any *One of these*, is the *One True GOD*.

Now in the *Letter of Enthusiasm*, and the Defence of it, directed to the *Four Ministers*, I have endeavour'd at least to shew, That this main Proposition, which they lay down as a Fundamental Article of Faith, is perfectly unintelligible ; that if they do not understand the Word *GOD*, in a different Sense, as apply'd to the *Three Persons* separately, and conjunctly consider'd, these Words have no Meaning at all ; that their main Principle is utterly inconsistent with all the human *Creeds* and *Tests* of *Orthodoxy* they have produc'd, and cannot possibly be reconcil'd even to their own Scripture Account of the Matter. I urg'd them farther with the fatal and mischievous Consequences of setting up this absurd unintelligible Principle, as a Fundamental Article of Faith, as necessary to Salvation, and Christian Communion, while the Scripture is absolutely silent about it, and they had not so much as attempted to produce any Scripture Evidence for any such *Necessity*. So that had their Account of the Matter been intelligible, consistent, or even true, as it appears to be neither ; yet still their pretended *Necessity* of it, and the Stress they lay upon it, must be altogether groundless and of fatal Consequence, as destructive of Christian Peace and Charity, and directly tending to subject and enslave the Understandings and Consciences of Men to an human Jurisdiction.

My Endeavours to prove all this, have lain before the World a considerable Time, and make up by far the greater Part of the Two Letters which Mr. *Fancourt* has undertaken to Animadvert upon. But this Writer, who can defend his Brethren without Argument, and clear up all Difficulties, without taking the least Notice of them; tells the World roundly, That I had brought this Charge without any Evidence to support it; nay, against the clearest Evidence to the contrary. When he says, That I had charg'd these Consequences upon them without Proof, it will not be worth my while to confute him here, by quoting Three Parts in Four of the Two Letters against him; and therefore I am content that what I have offer'd in Support of the Charge, should stand as it is, and speak for itself, till Mr. *Fancourt* can find something or other in Answer to it.

BUT what is this clear Evidence to the contrary? How does it appear, That the Consequences which I have charg'd upon Gentlemens Principles and Conduct, are weak and ill-grounded? Why, to prove this, he quotes certain Passages from the *Four Ministers*, in which they allow the Sufficiency of Scripture as a Rule of Faith, and declare for the Liberty and Right of private Judgment. But it falls out here very unluckily for Mr. *Fancourt*, that the Question is not, What these Gentlemen profess or declare; but what the Consequences of their Principles are, and what the Effects of their Conduct must be while they act upon these Principles. If I had charg'd them with professedly throwing off the Authority of Scripture, and setting up an human Jurisdiction in its Stead, or
with

with denying directly, and in Terms, the Right of private Judgment, and declaring themselves the only rightful, authoritative Interpreters of Scripture; in this Case, I say, their Profession and express Declaration to the contrary, had been a sufficient Evidence: But since these are only Consequences which I had charg'd upon their Principles, and, as I think, effectually supported, Mr. *Fancourt* must I presume, be suppos'd to allow the Charge, as I had laid it, whilst he does not think fit to offer any thing to the contrary.

HAD this Writer been as able to defend his Brethren, as he was willing, he would have endeavour'd to shew, That the Principles which I had attack'd, were sound and good, and that my Arguments were inconsequent and of no Force; that his Brethren, the *Four Ministers*, had advanc'd nothing as a necessary Article of Faith, but what the Holy Scriptures declar'd as such; that their Terms of Peace and Unity, are the very same with those insisted on by CHRIST and his Apostles; and that they have not endeavour'd to exclude Men from Church Communion, and the Benefits of the Christian Covenant, for Want of any other Qualification, but that Faith and Repentance which the Gospel requires as necessary to Salvation; in short, That their Principles are truly Christian and Catholick, and such as have no Tendency to Imposition, Persecution, Party Rage, or Church Tyranny. This doubtless, he would have endeavour'd to prove in Opposition to what I had offer'd to the contrary, if he had thought himself capable of it; for no Body I imagine can think that he wanted an Inclination.

And

And therefore as his Brethren will thank him perhaps for his Good-will ; so I have no Reason to be angry with him for the Shrewdness of his Arguments.

I had urg'd upon the Four Ministers, their setting up for strict and proper, *i. e. infallible Certainty* ; and this in a Matter which the whole Impartial World must allow to be very difficult and doubtful, at least ; and I made it appear, That if by *Knowledge* and *Certainty*, as they use and apply the Words, they intended only *Belief* or *Persuasion*, as the Words were sometimes used in a popular Way of Speaking, this must render the whole Passage unintelligible, trifling, and perfectly ridiculous. To this Mr. *Fancourt* makes no Reply ; but continues to tell us over and over, what his Brethren meant. Let their Meaning therefore be as he says, if he pleases ; I left it to their Choice at first, whether they would here take the Charge of *Presumption* or *trifling Impertinence*. And since he here seems to accept the latter for them, if they will confirm his Choice, I shall be easy.

THAT Knowledge and Certainty is frequently in a popular Way of Speaking, used for Belief or Persuasion, every Body will allow ; nor does this deserve to be minded or regarded, where nothing depends upon it, and where it does not give any different Turn to, or at all alter the Sense and Design of the Discourse. Now, because I would not give this Testy Gentleman any needless Trouble, whenever I happen in the same Way of Speaking to use Words *certainly, doubtfull, &c.* for the highest Degrees of Probability only, or in Cases which no Body can well doubt of, tho' there is not perhaps strict and absolute

Certainty, He may substitute, if he pleases, any other Words, as, *I think, I guess, &c.* in the Place of the former. If this please him better, it will serve my Turn as well, and leave every Argument and Expression of mine in its full Force and proper Significancy. Let this be done in the Passage relating to the Four Ministers, and I desire no more, but am content after such a Substitution, to leave every Body to judge of the Intelligibleness, Consistency, or Pertinence of the Discourse, as they shall find Occasion. And yet whenever Mr. *Fancourt* finds me in any little incidental Expression using the Words *certainly, doubtless, &c.* where there is not strict and proper Certainty, he triumphantly represents it as a parallel Case with that of the *Four Ministers*, and gravely returns it upon me under the Name and Notion of *Enthusiasm retorted*. But I think an Adversary must be hard put to it indeed, when he is driven to such poor Shifts as this.

IN the *Defence of the Letter of Enthusiasm*, I observ'd that Mr. *Fancourt* had committed a most gross and notorious Blunder about *subjective Certainty*, as having defin'd it by *indubitable Persuasion*; from whence it must follow, that every Man is equally *certain*, where his Persuasion is equally *strong and indubitable*, and consequently, that there may be *Certainty*, the highest and most *indubitable Certainty*, where there is not the least Truth, Consistency, or common Sense. To this he has nothing to say, but only, That he supposes his *own Persuasion* to be a *rational Persuasion*. And must not every one else suppose the same, or is it possible any Man should believe or be persuaded of any Thing at all without supposing that he has sufficient Reason for it? The Question here, is not What Mr. *Fancourt* supposes

poses of his own Persuasion, but wherein *subjective Certainty* consists, and what is the proper Nature and Definition of the Thing. And here our Author having been clearly convicted of a most gross and palpable Absurdity, instead of ingenuously owning it, or giving up the Point as indefensible, endeavours to shuffle it over, and seems resolv'd to stand to it in Spite of Reason or common Sense.

HE proceeds to exercise his Talent in chiding me for what I had said concerning the Nature and Ground of *Faith*; and he is so angry at the Account I had given of *Implicit Faith*, that he has quite lost his Wits upon the Subject, and no Man could have exposed an Adversary more than he has here exposed himself.

I had maintain'd that *Faith*, *Belief*, or the rational Assent of the Mind, could in no Case go beyond the *Perception* of the *Understanding*; and that to believe a Thing without knowing what we believe, or without having any certain fix'd Ideas to the Terms of the Proposition assented to, must be impossible and contradictory. Now this plainly affected those who set up for the Belief of what they cannot explain or render intelligible, and who after they have been so often and so closely press'd to it, are not able to affix any determinate Ideas to their own Words. But here upon my acknowledging a most certain and demonstrable Principle of *Science*, namely, That there are Infinite Things in Nature which we cannot understand, or that our Capacities are not Infinite, and therefore cannot take in all the Infinite Truths concerning God and the Nature of Things, our Author, p. 31. thus exclaims, "What can't
" Mr. *Morgan* believe that to be, which yet
" he acknowledges to be! What a mysterious

“ Art is here! to be able readily to assent un-
 “ to that which is neither the Object of his
 “ Knowledge nor yet of his Faith! This I
 “ must own to borrow a Pun from our witty
 “ Author is a *sound Foundation for implicit Faith*
 “ *which can be built upon nothing but Sounds.* Me-
 “ thinks he should not willingly contend for
 “ nought, if he knew it to be nothing he con-
 “ tended for; unless, (which yet I cannot
 “ suppose) he fights [for Bread or] only to
 “ keep himself in Breath. For my Part I can-
 “ not perceive in what he differs from these
 “ Gentlemen in the Point before us, abating
 “ the *Self-Contradiction*, which he must take as
 “ his *own particular*.”

I have quoted this as a Sample of Mr. Fan-
 court's Method of *retorting Enthusiasm*, this being
 perhaps as remarkable and material an Instance
 of it as any in the whole Book. Our Author
 may rejoice and triumph as he pleases in his
 own Weakness, and Insolence, but as for my
 Part I cannot but pity the Man, and am in
 some Pain for him whilst I am oblig'd to call
 him to so publick an Account for such Stuff as
 this.

THAT there are Infinite Things in Nature
 which we cannot understand, and which are
 wholly incomprehensible and above our Rea-
 son, *i. e.* that the human Understanding is fi-
 nite and limited, and no ways adequate to an in-
 finite Object, is as certainly and infallibly true,
 and as much an Object of Knowledge or Mat-
 ter of Science, as the Being of a God, our
 own Existence, or any Scientifick Principle in
 the World. We *certainly know*, as well as *believe*,
 that our *Knowledge is not infinite*. And yet this
 it seems is *something unknown*, and Mr. Fancourt
 pretends that by granting this, I must main-
 tain

tain that I assent to what I can neither *know* nor *believe*. But I can neither know nor believe that our Author is here in good earnest, because I can neither know nor believe that he has quite lost his Senses; and yet I verily believe that he would talk more to the Purpose if his Cause could bear him out in it. But after all I fear our Author will never be able to bring an Instance of his believing any thing that he does not understand, and 'till he can inform me better I must still imagine that to believe we know not what, is really to believe nothing at all. This is not properly to *believe*, but to *trifle* and *wander in the Dark*, to lose ones *Senses*, and to use *Words* without *Ideas*. But that I may no longer amuse the World with my impenetrable *Darkness*, our Author, p. 32. undertakes to set the Matter in a *clearer Light*; in order to which *clearing*, he makes Choice of this Proposition, *Jesus is Emanuel*. I shall take no Notice of his mere trifling about it, since that could serve only to expose him; but when he has prepared the Way by *pure Impertinence*, what he brings it to at length is this, that wherein any Proposition we understand the *Terms*, and their *Connexion*, so as to join or separate the Ideas in our own *Minds*, as they are affirmed or deny'd one of another in the *Proposition itself*, this is *explicit Faith*, or the Assent of the Mind to that particular Proposition. But then he pretends that a Man may assent to, or believe a particular Proposition, tho' he has no Ideas of, or understands not the Meaning of the *Terms*; and that he may *believe* for Instance, or assent to this particular Proposition, *Jesus is Emanuel*, without knowing what is meant by *Jesus*, or what by *Emanuel*. This which he calls *Implicit Faith*, is as he declares what he and the

Four Ministers maintain in Opposition to those who say we can *believe* no farther than we *understand*; and if we *understand* but a Part of a Proposition we can *believe* but a Part, even that Part which we *understand*.

HERE then the Matter will soon be brought to an Issue, for I own the Question to be as he has represented it, and yet I still assert it to be as impossible to assent to one particular Proposition without understanding the Terms, as it is to see without Light, or visible Objects. *Faith*, *Belief* or *Assent* being nothing else but the joining or separating of Ideas in the Mind, just as they are affirmed, or deny'd of each other in the particular Proposition assented to, 'tis plainly impossible thus to join or separate in our Minds the Ideas of a Proposition whose Terms are to us perfectly insignificant, and of which we have really no Ideas at all. This is evident to a Demonstration; but Mr. *Fancourt* thinks he has overthrown it, by observing, that tho' we know not for Instance what is meant by *Jesus*, or what by *Emanuel*, yet we may believe in general upon a superadded sufficient Testimony, that this Proposition, *Jesus is Emanuel* contains some certain Truth in it. But here it must, I suppose, be evident that he substitutes *one Proposition* for *another*. A *general* for a particular *one*, and then pretends that the Belief of a *general Proposition* of which he *has Ideas*, is the Belief of the *particular Proposition*, of which he has *no Ideas*. The Proposition which he pretends to believe without knowing what he believes, or which he *believes*, *without believing* is this, *Jesus is Emanuel*; but the Proposition which he really and explicitly believes is this, that the *former Proposition* falls under the general Class of *unknown Truths*. He who really and explicitly

PLICITLY believes or assents to this particular Proposition, *Jesus is Emanuel*, must in his own Mind joyn or connect the Idea of *Jesus*, with the Idea of *Emmanuel*, which he cannot possibly do if he has no such Ideas. But he who believes or assents to the other general Proposition only joyns or connects the general Abstract Idea of a *Proposition*, with the general Abstract Idea of *Truth*.

AND here, if Mr. *Fancourt* cannot see that these are two quite different Connexions, and relate to two perfectly distinct and different Propositions, I doubt it would be to no great Purpose for me to take much Pains to inform him better. And now we have all our Author's Clearings and Elucidations upon this Subject, I think 'tis evident that in his way of Talking, we may as truly and properly be said to *know* and *understand*, what cannot be *known* or *understood*, as to *believe*, or *assent* to what we cannot understand. In Opposition to which I have endeavoured farther to confirm the Truth of this Principle, that the *rational Belief or Assent of the Mind*, can in no Case be carried beyond the *Perception of the Understanding*.

I shall not now stay to expose the Weakness and Impertinence of all Mr. *Fancourt's* insignificant *Gleanings*, and his many dull insipid Abuses hereupon. I can easily forgive his Heat and Resentment upon this Occasion, since perhaps it may arise from his great Affection, and many Obligations to his Friends and Benefactors, as he has given the World to understand already. However I would advise him when he shews himself in Publick again, to leave his Passions at Home, and bring his Understanding along with him.

PERHAPS

PERHAPS it may be expected that I should here take some Notice of Mr. *Fancourt's* Objections against what I had offered in a Letter to Mr. *Cumming* concerning Consequences, or the Absurdity of that common Pretence of carrying the Principles and Doctrines of *pure Revelation*, beyond the Original express Sense. Now tho' I stand accountable for this to an abler Pen, and should be glad to see Mr. *Cumming's* own Defence, yet since our Author must be meddling where he had no Business, I shall endeavour to let him see what he has got by it.

WHEN I advanc'd that Principle against Mr. *Cumming*, I assign'd Reasons for it from the different Nature of *necessary* and *contingent Truths*, or from that well known Distinction between *Matters of Science*, and *Matters of Fact*. I observed that all necessary Scientifick Truths, having an immutable eternal Relation to, and Dependence on each other, might therefore be inferr'd or deduc'd from one another in a Train of Rational Consequences; whereas all *contingent Truths*, or *Facts*, as all Matters of *mere Revelation* are with respect to us, since they are independent on each other, and have no necessary Connexion with the Principles of Reason and Science properly so call'd, and since they depend absolutely on Testimony, cannot possibly be carry'd beyond the Original express Declaration of the Testifier or Revealer himself. But this Reason which is perhaps demonstrative, our prudent Author takes no Notice of, and does not it seems think himself concerned with. He saw perhaps very well that he could not pretend to answer what I had offered, and therefore instead of this he devises two other Reasons for me, which never enter'd into my Head, which could not possibly be

be any Reasons at all, and in which he trifles, presumes, and dogmatizes beyond Example. And here as a Specimen of our Author's Civility and good Sense, I shall quote what he has thought fit to offer upon this Head, p. 38. where speaking of his implicit contradictory *Faith* which we have already considered he says, " and by this Time you must observe, that if
 " it be indeed a blind *Faith*, a mere *mechanical*
 " *Impulse*, *Enthusiasm*, or a *strong Persuasion* with-
 " out any *rational Grounds*, as he, in his great
 " *Modesty* and *Civility* is pleas'd to call it; Mr.
 " *Morgan's* own *Faith* is every Jot as blind,
 " *mechanical* and *enthusiastick*, as his Neigh-
 " bours: Nay, more so; if what he affirms
 " be true, that *Independent Facts* are *incapable of*
 " *yielding Consequences*; and that this *Act* of the
 " *Mind* in drawing *rational Inferences* and *Deducti-*
 " *ons*, must be confin'd to *Principles of Reason* and
 " *Science*, distinct from *Matters of Fact* and *Testi-*
 " *mony*. For if it be impossible in the Nature
 " of the Thing, to carry any Matter of pure
 " *Revelation*, beyond the express Sense and
 " *Import* of the *Revelation* itself, as abstract-
 " ed from all really distinct *Consequences*
 " whatever; (which is his Opinion). It must
 " be (I presume) for one of these two *Rea-*
 " *sons*: Either, first, because the express Sense
 " of a Matter of pure *Revelation* is impossible
 " to be known; for if the Sense of *Revelation*
 " may be known; why mayn't such *Deducti-*
 " *ons* as represent by Parts what the whole
 " contains, be drawn from it? And are the
 " *Inferences* that the *Principles of Reason* af-
 " ford any more? But if the express *Import*
 " itself of a *Divine Revelation* is not to be
 " understood, what does this Writer of *Eter-*
 " *nal Contradictions* mean, when he says, *That*
 " *Things which depend wholly upon Revelation, must*

“ by the Revelation itself, be brought down to our
 “ Understandings and Capacities, so as to form some
 “ clear, consistent Notions and Conceptions of them.
 “ Or else, secondly, because the Truth of such
 “ a Sense is impossible to be proved: Which
 “ must leave therefore the Truth of all those
 “ Consequences which depend thereon, doubtful
 “ and uncertain; there being in this Case
 “ no rational Foundation to believe either
 “ the Propositions themselves, or any Truths
 “ that are compriz’d in them. But will our
 “ Author say that the Truth of the Revelation
 “ is doubtful, and yet that *the Apostles, were,*
 “ *doubtless infallible, in whatever they delivered as*
 “ *the Mind and Will of GOD?*” From what is
 here quoted the Reader will perceive that our
 Author is most ridiculously angry, and has
 been frighted almost out of his Wits. ’Tis really
 a great Exercise of Patience to be plagued
 continually with such *Impertinence*. But why
 should this *Trifler* put his own *presumptive Reasons*
 upon me, against my *express Declarations*
 to the contrary? And this too, when I had
 given him *another Reason*, and as I think a plain
demonstrative Reason, to which he has said nothing,
 and which therefore as may well be
 presum’d he could not answer.

BUT does he indeed know, that the Act of
Inference, or Deduction, depends upon the *Natural Relations*
 of Things one to another, or does he not? If he does I
 would ask him how it is possible that contingent
 Truths, or Truths in Fact only, betwixt which there
 is no natural Connexion and Dependance, should
 be infer’d one from another? Or how any
 Circumstances of a Fact can possibly be known
 farther than is express’d and declared in the
Testimony itself, upon which all our Knowledge
 of such Matters must entirely depend?

HERE

HERE he has never attempted to answer the Reason of the Thing, nor to give any Instance in Fact to the contrary; and therefore it may be presum'd that he does not understand the Principle. And this is what he has plainly enough discover'd in the Questions he asks, *Why mayn't such Deductions as represent by Parts what the whole contains, be drawn from it? And are the Inferences that the Principles of Reason afford any more?* Yes certainly; the Inferences which the Principles of Reason afford, are something more than the Principle itself, from which they are drawn represented by its several Parts; for otherwise *Demonstration* would be nothing more than *Definition*, or explaining a complex Term by enumerating the several simple Ideas of which it consists.

CAN Mr. Fancourt imagine that the whole System of Geometry, and the possible Truths of that Kind, are contain'd as Parts in this Proposition, *the three Angles of a Triangle are equal to two right Angles?* Or that all the Truths and Doctrines of Natural Religion are included as the several constituent Parts of this Principle, *Man is a rational free Agent; under the special Government of a Supreme Being?* And yet this must be the Case if he understands the Matter right. But before this accurate Writer pretends to be so angry with those who will not talk in his blundering Way, he ought to acquaint himself better with the Nature of Things, and with the well known and establish'd Signification of the Words; so far at least as not to put *Definition* for *Demonstration*, and *Description* for *Deduction*. This I think I may be accountable for, that whenever our Author shall vouchsafe to give us any particular Instances of his rational Inferences and Deductions, from Matters of Fact and Testimony

itself, it will soon appear, that these Inferences are the very Principle either in whole or in part, and that his Consequence carries him at most no farther, and perhaps not quite so far as the Principle itself: This I say will easily be made appear or something worse, namely, that his pretended *Inference* has no Relation at all to the *Principle*, and that it is neither a *Part* of it, nor a *Consequence* from it.

THIS Doctrine of Consequences so nearly affects those who pretend to build their Hopes of Salvation, and the most necessary Fundamental Articles of the Christian Faith upon it, that I think it may reasonably be expected they should clear this their main Principle before they proceed too far in their excommunicating, hereticating Method. Let them prove that Things necessary to Salvation and Christian Catholick Communion, are left to the Inferences and Deductions of human Reason, and that they are not plainly express'd and made characteristically necessary in the Revelation itself. 'Till this be done, I verily believe Mr. *Fancourt* must leave his *Subscribing Brethren* but in an ill Plight, whatever else he might be able to say in their Defence.

AND this brings me to the last Account depending between Mr. *Fancourt* and me relating to *Sincerity*. In which he has perhaps used his *utmost Endeavours* to corrupt and pervert the well known establish'd Signification of Words, and the plain Scope and Design of all that I had said, in order to charge me with the most groundless and unrighteous Consequences. To give the Reader a Sample of Mr. *Fancourt's Justice and Impartiality*, while he is treating of *Sincerity*, I shall here quote the whole Passage out of the Letter of *Enthusiasm*, from whence he
has

has torn that Scrap with which he had made
 so weak and insignificant a Clamour. Having
 there call'd upon the *Four Ministers* to give some
 Account of their Conduct in setting up a Prin-
 ciple as a necessary fundamental Article of the
 Christian Faith, which as I had shewn could
 not consist either with Reason or Scripture, I
 add, p. 35, 36. " But tho' I have sufficient
 " Reason to conclude that you are under a
 " Mistake in this Matter, yet I have more
 " Charity than to think that your Error is
 " damnable; I am persuaded that whatever
 " Mistakes or Errors are consistent with a
 " sincere Endeavour to know the Will of God,
 " and to do it; are consistent with Holiness
 " and therefore with Salvation; and that God
 " not only will not condemn a Man for an
 " Error absolutely invincible, but will also up-
 " on the gracious Terms of his Gospel Cove-
 " nant, by a general Repentance, thro' the
 " Merits of CHRIST, be ready to pardon
 " all such Mistakes and Errors as Men may
 " fall into, not from any *vicious selfish Principle*,
 " or any wilful Opposition to the *Truth*, but
 " from mere human Frailty, or such Weak-
 " nesses and Oversights as are common to the
 " best of Men. This is certainly most agree-
 " able to the Genius and Spirit of Christiani-
 " ty; a Principle every where recommended
 " and enforc'd by the Gospel of CHRIST;
 " and without such a Principle of Charity,
 " and that Disposition and Conduct that must
 " flow from it, and be influenc'd by it, I fear
 " the most illuminated Dogmatizer of us all
 " would have Reason to tremble under the In-
 " spection of his Omniscient LORD, and De-
 " spair of his own Salvation. For my own
 " Part I see Reason every Day more and more
 " to

“ to thank GOD for the Blessing of such an
 “ Education, as never led me into these Prin-
 “ ciples of Bigotry and Enthusiasm, but that I
 “ can worship the one true GOD, thro’ the Me-
 “ rits and Mediation of his only begotten SON,
 “ depending upon the effectual Aid and Assi-
 “ stance of the HOLY SPIRIT, to lead me in-
 “ to all *Necessary Truth*, and to guide me thro’
 “ the Snares and Temptations of this World,
 “ in the Way of Peace and Holiness to the
 “ heavenly everlasting Kingdom ; without
 “ thinking myself oblig’d to pronounce Dam-
 “ nation on the one Side or the other, where
 “ Men appear equally honest and sincere,
 “ merely because they can’t agree about cer-
 “ tain dark mysterious Points, which some
 “ weak Zealots may reckon of great Impor-
 “ tance. In such Cases, it seldom happens,
 “ but the confident, presuming, dogmatical
 “ Side are in the Wrong ; and whether they
 “ are Right or Wrong with regard to their
 “ Notions, they are certainly wrong in their
 “ Conduct, when they are so free with their
 “ Anathema’s and Curses, as if GOD had en-
 “ trusted them with the Keys of the bottom-
 “ less Pit, and withall given them a Commissi-
 “ on to consign over those to everlasting Fire,
 “ who in the Judgment of the whole impar-
 “ tial Wold must be look’d upon to be as in-
 “ telligent and honest, as good Men, and as
 “ good Christians as themselves. For my own
 “ Part, I long for that Time, which is not far
 “ off, when this Spirit of Implicit Faith, and
 “ blind uncharitable Zeal, shall be exploded
 “ and banished our Protestant Country ; and
 “ *when Sincerity on the one Hand, and the absolute*
 “ *Necessity of being in the right on the other, shall re-*
 “ *main as the only distinguishing Principles of Pa-*
 “ *pists and Protestants* ”.

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Now from hence Mr. *Fancourt* concludes that I have set up for Sincerity without Truth, that Sincerity in this Account of it may be separated from *all*, even the most *necessary* and *Fundamental Truth*, and that the Doctrine I here advance is the very *Dregs of Paganism*, and perfectly consistent with the utmost Degrees of diabolical Delusion, and Moral Wickedness.

I shall not here pretend to argue with such an Adversary as this, upon a Point that is too plain to be disputed, and in which he has shewn himself incapable of Conviction. But since he appeals to the *Judgment of the Impartial*, in this Case, I accept the Appeal, and believe I may venture to give him up the whole Cause if he can find any impartial Person, or indeed any Man at all in his right Senses excepting himself, who is of his Mind in this Particular.

I had urg'd it upon him that he could not make good his Consequences without supposing Sincerity to consist only in a Man's acting upon his *present Sentiments* whatever they are, and whether he has made any rational free Enquiry concerning it or not: To which he replies, that this is only Imagination, that I mistake and abuse him in supposing it, and that he did not understand Sincerity in any such Sense. He ought therefore to have shown in what other possible Sense of the World, *Sincerity* might be separated from all *Truth*, and be consistent with the grossest *Paganism*, and Moral Wickedness. But 'tis enough for such Writers to shift, and evade what they cannot answer, and perhaps our Author reckons himself accountable to God only.

HOWEVER if one Method will not do he is resolved to try another, and accordingly he has two very different Weights and Measures,
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by which he examines and adjusts my Account of Sincerity. When he puts it into one Scale he finds it extremely wanting, there is no Truth nor Soundness in it, 'tis lighter than Vanity and nothing, the very Dregs of Paganism, the grossest Diabolism and moral Wickedness: But when he applies us to the other End of the Balance 'tis too heavy, it outweighs all human Attainments, and amounts even to a super-angelical Perfection.

UPON my saying that *he who acts according to his Judgment, after he has taken all the care he can to inform himself right by an Impartial Examination, is sincere in his Practice, and that both these (i. e. sincere Inquiry, and sincere Practice) are as necessary to denominate the Person sincere*, this sanguine Writer thus exclaims, p. 44. “ So that he that
 “ knows any thing less than what he might
 “ possibly have known ; or he that believes
 “ any thing short of what after the utmost
 “ Enquiries he would have seen Reason to be-
 “ lieve ; and does not act up, and steadily too,
 “ unto what he might thus have known and
 “ believed, is for ought I see, (Mr. Morgan be-
 “ ing Judge) no other than an insincere Man,
 “ or than a mere Hypocrite ; and whom he
 “ himself could consign over to everlasting
 “ Fire. Alas are there no Degrees in Sincerity
 “ neither no more than there are in Certainty !
 “ Shall nothing bear the Name of this
 “ excellent Grace, but the highest Flights we
 “ can attain unto ! What Havock shall such a
 “ Casuistical Divine as this make of the Peace
 “ and Consolations of weak Believers ! How
 “ more charitable as well as just, are the Sentiments
 “ of our Brethren ? Who allow that
 “ the most upright Saint upon Earth is not
 “ free from sinful Guile, but often see cause to
 “ complain

“ complain of a treacherous Heart ”. Here it may be observed that our Author throws himself all along into Fits of Astonishment and Surprise, and endeavours to persuade his Reader, that when I talk of *Mens taking all the Care they can, making the best Use of their rational Faculties, &c.* to discover the Mind and Will of GOD for their own Salvation, that I intended to strain these and such-like Expressions to the utmost Extent of a bare natural Possibility, so as to exclude the Grace of the Gospel, and that Pardon which it offers to Sinners upon Repentance, and Faith in, or a Dependence on, the Merits, Mediation and Intercession of JESUS CHRIST.

BUT how came Mr. *Fancourt* to make this Discovery, that I am no Christian, that I have thrown off the Grace and Mercy of the Gospel and all the Benefits of CHRIST'S Death to Sinners, and that I can admit of no Salvation or Acceptance with GOD, but upon a strictly faultless and unculpable Obedience? Do the Expressions *making the best Use of the Faculties, and taking all the Care we can, &c.* necessarily imply so much? Or rather are they not constantly and without Exception when apply'd to Mens Moral Conduct used in a lower and more qualify'd Sense? I challenge him to produce any *Casuistical Divine*, or any Philosopher, Divine, or Moralist at all, who has ever used these Expressions in Reference to Mens moral Behaviour and Conduct in the Sense that he would strain them to.

BUT does our serious Author never exhort his Hearers from the Pulpit to use their best Endeavours, and take all the Care they can for their own Salvation? Is he afraid of this least they should look upon their Duty as a

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Thing impracticable, or least he should disturb the *Peace and Consolations* of WEAK BELIEVERS? Does he tell them that they need not take all the Care they can, and that their best Endeavours are not necessary in this Case, but that they may indulge their Pride, their Malice, and other particular Vices, provided they are but *right and good in the Main*? If this be so I doubt our Author's Qualifications are intended only for his particular Friends, and that he cannot allow his Adversaries to be sincere upon the same Terms.

BUT 'tis evident that the very Nature of the Subject, and the obvious Reason of the Thing itself might qualify these Expressions, and that there is no need of making any such particular Restrictions. What if one should say that our Author has done *his best* in this Performance, and taken *all the Care he can* not to expose himself to the Pity or Contempt of the Publick? I suppose the Expressions might be allow'd as just and proper enough, and what every one would easily understand. But yet if I should venture to say this, perhaps Mr. *Fancourt* would call me to a very strict and severe Account for it, and maintain on the contrary, that his Natural Faculties, in their utmost Extent might possibly have carried him a little farther.

No Body scruples to say of a wicked Man, who is strongly and habitually devoted to his Avarice and Ambition, that he takes all the *Care he can* to raise and enrich himself, and uses his *best Endeavours* to obtain his carnal selfish End; and if another should take the same Care, and use the same Endeavours to please GOD, and obtain his Favour, every one would allow him to be sincere, and that he
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made the best Use of his rational Faculties, and Talents in the Pursuit of true Happiness; tho' in the one Case and the other, there might be Room enough for different Degrees of Application and Diligence, consistent with the same personal Characters, and the same general Way of expressing them.

THESE Things are clear and obvious to the meanest Capacity from the natural universal Use of Language, and therefore our Author not finding any Difficulty in the Case was forced to make one. Now tho' this might pass as a sufficient Reply to all that he has offered concerning Sincerity, yet since he affects to throw himself into Doubts and Perplexities upon the Subject, loads me with a Multitude of Questions, and pretends to be at a great Loss about my Meaning, I shall submit myself for a few Pages to the *hard Fate* of being his Catechumen: And here the first Thing that puzzles our learned Author is, what I should mean by an *Impartial Examination*; whether it be such Impartiality, Unprejudicedness, &c. as a Man may be capable of who is subject to human Infirmities, Passions and wrong Impressions, or such as they only can be capable of who are free from all these? Sure I am that I have not given him the least Ground for this Scruple. I always speak of the *Sincerity* of *Men* and not of *Angels*; and of Men under their present *real Circumstances*, such as they are in *Fact*, and not under any meer imaginary Circumstances in which Mr. *Fancourt* by his Invention and Sagacity might think fit to place them. What I maintain is this, that God will judge and reward Men according to what they are and have, and not according to what they are not and have not. And consequently that

he will not condemn and punish any Man, at any Time, and under any Circumstances, for not knowing, believing or doing, what that Person, at that Time, and under those Circumstances, could not possibly know, believe, or do. Nay, that GOD will not only, not condemn Men for any Ignorance or Error absolutely invincible, but will also by the Grace and Mercy of the Gospel make great Allowances in this Case, and not condemn or punish Men but where their Duty was clear and obvious, easy and practicable, by those gracious Aids and Assistances, Helps and Advantages which were freely, sincerely and compassionately offered them.

THIS is what I have declared for, and the main Principle I insist on as every one must see and know; and if Mr. *Fancourt* thinks he can prove the contrary he is doubtless at Liberty whenever he pleases to make a Trial of his Skill.

He goes on, p. 46. to ask whether Men may not be sincere in their Enquiries without being so in their Practice, and whether it may not be just in GOD for this Cause to *send them strong Delusions, that they should believe a Lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the Truth, but had Pleasure in Unrighteousness?* No Body I presume can imagine that GOD is bound to convince and save Men whether they will or no, or that GOD may not justly leave those to their wilfull chosen Blindness, Stupidity, and practical Error, who resolve to be wicked and profligate in Spite of Evidence and Conviction, and in Opposition to all the Reasons and Motives that can be offered them to the contrary. This is plainly the Case which the Apostle supposes in the Passage here refer'd to, but
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what this is to the Author's Purpose, or what he would infer from hence is, I must own, beyond my Comprehension. There is no Connexion between Speculation and Practice of any Sort or Kind whatever ; no Truth in Speculation and Theory which a good Man may know and believe, but the most wicked Man upon Earth however forsaken of GOD may know and believe the same. A Man may be perfectly and thoroughly Orthodox in the Sense of our Author, the Four Ministers, and all Creed-Makers, and yet be given up to strong Delusions to believe a Lie in the Apostle's Sense, *i. e.* left to their own free Choice under the practical, and therefore damnable Error, of a wicked ungodly Life. The Author's Malice in this Question is visible enough, tho' it is no more to his Purpose than if he had ask'd, whether GOD might not by his immediate Power suspend the Motions of the Planets in their Orbs.

HE queries farther, *Whether the Truths which have a necessary Connexion with Sincerity are not as necessary, and may not be as much insisted on as Sincerity itself?* Without all doubt : Who ever deny'd it ? This is what I contend for, that no Truth can be necessary to any Man's Salvation, but what has a necessary Connexion with that Man's Sincerity.

HE goes on with his Catechism, p. 47. and asks, *Whether the Truths which have a necessary Connexion with and Dependence upon Mr. Morgan's Sincerity must needs be the same in Number, Kind, and Weight, with the Truths that have a necessary Connexion with and Dependence upon another Man's Sincerity?* This is asking whether all Mens Capacities and Talents are not equal, or one and the same, and whether those who know
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more and have more Talents committed to them are not oblig'd in Proportion to do more than others? Which is too easy, or rather too trifling a Question to need an Answer. But he tells us, *If the Truths which are necessarily connected with one Man's Sincerity, are not the very same with the Truths which are necessarily connected with another Man's Sincerity; it will follow that the Truths which neither are, nor appear to be of any Necessity or Importance to one Person, may really be, and appear so to another.* This is very true, I readily grant it; and what then? Why then the Terms of Salvation, and the Terms of Christian Communion to every Man are not one and the same; and so that there may be Room for CHRISTIAN CHARITY, where I am not therefore oblig'd to receive into CHRISTIAN COMMUNION. But here I think our Author is a little mysterious, and ought to explain himself farther, for I cannot imagine what Christian Charity Mr. Fancourt can have for a Man whom he cannot admit to Christian Communion. If he cannot admit a Man to Christian Communion I hope 'tis because he does not think him qualify'd for it, and that he would not willfully and knowingly exclude from his Communion those who are qualify'd upon Gospel Terms for the Kingdom of Heaven. But if he can have this Charity for his dissenting Brother to believe that he is a good Christian, in the Favour of God, and intitled to the Kingdom of Heaven, and yet notwithstanding this his Judgment concerning him, will exclude him from Christian Communion, or refuse to communicate with him as a Christian, I must leave him to account for this Conduct to our common Lord and MASTER at the last and great Day, since

I cannot expect that he should ever account for it before.

'Tis evident that this Writer goes upon a Principle that must oblige him to separate Communion from all who know either more or less than himself. For he who has a greater Capacity and knows more, will have some Talent or other necessary to be improved, which cannot be necessary in our Author who has it not; and he whose Capacities and Abilities are less, may want several Talents not necessary to him, which yet may be of great Importance and Necessity to be well apply'd and improv'd by Mr. *Fancourt* to whom they are committed. Upon this Principle he must separate from, and excommunicate some Christians, because they know more, and see farther, or clearer than himself, and others because they are not quite so wise as he; tho' perhaps he might find it hard to form any Church or Congregation of such perfectly *fit* *zable Believers*. These are his Terms of Communion, which yet are as far from being Christian as a private uncharitable, schismatical Faction is, from being the Catholick Church of CHRIST, or any Part of it.

BUT notwithstanding these different Capacities and Talents of different Persons under the same Christian Dispensation, yet the Catholick Terms of Christian Communion and Acceptance with God are the same at all Times to every Man alike, and throughout the whole Christian World, how much soever it may puzzle Mr. *Fancourt* to conceive of it; and concerning these Catholick Terms of Communion and Acceptance with God no Christian could be in any Doubt or Hesitation at all, if human Creeds, and the presumptuous anti-

anti-christian Decisions of fallible corrupt, and designing Men, had not long since established another Rule of Orthodoxy besides the Holy Scriptures; and very different Terms of Communion from those which were always declared for and insisted upon by CHRIST and his Apostles. But I have already said so much upon this Subject in the two Letters to Mr. *Cumming* and Sir *Richard Blackmore* that I hope the Reader will excuse my giving myself any farther Trouble about it, 'till something more to the Purpose shall be offered on the other Side.

MR. *Fancourt* perhaps might think himself slighted if I should not take some Notice of his new ingenious Hypothesis concerning the TRINITY. He thinks that three distinct compleat Powers of Understanding, Willing, &c. in the one individual Substance of GOD, is a just and proper Representation of what the Scripture declares of the Three Persons, the FATHER, SON and HOLY GHOST. To expose this Hypothesis in its full Light and in all its Absurdities and contradictory Consequences, would be a very tedious and unnecessary Work; and therefore I shall only make a few brief Remarks upon it, such as may be sufficient I suppose to overthrow it.

FIRST then 'tis evident that this Hypothesis cannot account for the different distinguishing Offices and Operations of different and distinct Persons or Agents. The Author talks much of distinct similar Powers as the Characteristicks of Persons, and yet he mentions the Word *Persons* with great Caution and seems really afraid of the Expression. A similar Power he owns is not the *whole of a Person*. If his similar Power be not the *whole*, he ought to have told us whether it be a Part of the Person and

and what the other Part is, that we might have known what he intended by a *whole Person*. But I think 'tis evident that in his Hypothesis these personal Powers cannot be Persons at all either in whole or in Part, but only the Properties or Attributes of a Person or Persons. I would ask then, what are the *Persons*, or *Person* to *whom* these *Powers* belong, and by *whom* they are exerted and employ'd? Here

- if he would speak out and speak Sense in his own Way, he must say the active intelligent *Substance*, or *Subject*, which being suppos'd but one and the same, 'tis plain the Person or Agent can be but one, who sometimes acts and determines himself by one Power and sometimes by another. And thus his Hypothesis does not relieve him at all, since he must still suppose God to be but one *Person* or *Agent*, as well as one *Being*. And this one personal Being, or one true God, must be considered as communicating to, and covenanting with himself, as sending and commissioning himself, commanding and obeying himself, as worshipping and praying to himself, and making Satisfaction to himself. The same individual intelligent Being or Agent will make Satisfaction with one Power, and receive Satisfaction with another Power, will insist upon Infinite Satisfaction with one Power, and dispence with all Satisfaction in another Power, will worship and obey himself with one Power, and receive his own Homage and Obedience with another Power. Nay, the same *God*, and the same *Person*, the same active intelligent *Subject*, if this Hypothesis be Sense, will act and not act, suffer and not suffer, be God and no God, Man and no Man. This I think

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must be the State and Condition of Christianity according to our Author's Hypothesis. But whether this be likely to clear up the Scriptures, or to make Men wiser and better or not I must leave him to consider.

It farther deserves a particular Remark, that this Hypothesis concerning the Being and Perfections of God is purely arbitrary, without any conceivable Ground, Reason or Necessity in the Nature of Things. All that our Author here contends for is the Possibility of his Hypothesis, or that what he supposes does not imply a Contradiction in the Nature of Things; but then he must grant that the contrary is equally possible, and may equally be supposed without any Contradiction in the Nature of Things; for he does not pretend to prove that what he has advanc'd is necessary, and that it cannot possibly be otherwise in the Nature and Reason of Things; from whence 'tis plain that he has here represented God as a mere contingent Being, whose Existence or Non-existence are equally possible, and may be equally supposed without any Contradiction in the Nature and Reason of Things. 'Tis evident that the Author can pretend to no more Reason and Necessity in the Nature of the Thing to suppose three similar co-ordinate personal Powers or Properties, three Understandings, three Wills, &c. in God, than he has to suppose an Indefinite or Infinite Number of such personal Powers and Properties. One infinitely perfect Understanding can know as much as three, or an Infinite Number of such Understandings, and one absolutely perfect Will or Power of acting can do as much as three, or an Infinite Number of such Wills.

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'Tis plain then that the supposing more than one in this Case must be a Supposition purely arbitrary, without any Reason or Necessity in the Nature of Things ; and that such a Supposition would imply no farther or higher Perfection at all, since one absolutely perfect Understanding and Will, must be capable and sufficient to know and do every Thing that is possible to be known or done, and to deny this must be a direct and express Contradiction.

THE plain Consequence of all this is, that Mr. *Fancourt*'s Hypothesis destroys, and gives up all the rational demonstrative Evidence and Proof for the Being and Existence of *one God*, or one Supreme independent first Cause, by supposing GOD to be such a Sort of Being as exists without any Reason or Necessity in the Nature of the Thing. He will say perhaps that there may be a Reason and Necessity in the Nature of the Thing for the Existence of such a Being as he has represented under the Name and Notion of the one God, tho' that Reason and Necessity be undiscoverable by human Reason, as being above and beyond our Understandings and Capacities : But still this will be giving up all the rational Evidence and Proof for the Being and Existence of GOD, and placing Natural Religion upon the same Foundation with Atheism itself.

AN Atheist will tell him that the Universe is eternal, necessary, and self-existent, by an infinite eternal Series and Succession of necessary natural Causes and Effects. Now how would Mr. *Fancourt* confute such an Adversary, and overthrow this Atheistical Hypothesis?

Would he say that 'tis most unreasonable and absurd to suppose the necessary Self-Existence of Things which are evidently in their own Nature contingent, and for whose Existence there is no more apparent Reason or Necessity in the Nature of the Things themselves than for their Non-Existence; and consequently that they cannot possibly exist by an absolute intrinsick Necessity in the Things themselves, but must necessarily derive their Existence from the free Agency of some first independent Cause? He cannot with any Grace urge this or any such like Argument against an Atheist; because the other would easily turn his own Hypothesis upon him, and make it appear that he himself supposes the same Thing concerning God, and that there is no more Reason or Necessity in the Nature of the Thing for the Existence of such a Being as he has represented under the Name of God, than there is for the necessary eternal Self-Existence of the Universe itself, independent of any extrinsick efficient Cause at all. I hope our Author would not here appeal with his Atheist from Reason to Scriptures tho' I think he would have no other way for it; but with what Success I must leave him to consider.

THE plain Truth of the Case is in short this, no Essential Attribute or Perfection can possibly belong to GOD at all which does not necessarily belong to him, so as to imply the Impossibility of the contrary in the Nature and Reason of the Thing. The Scripture reveals many Things concerning the Good-Will and Pleasure, the Actions or free Operations of GOD, and the Exercise and Display of his
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Natural Essential Attributes and Perfections, in his Dispensations of Grace towards his Creatures ; but it reveals no new Essential Attribute or Perfection in God, which was not known or demonstrable before from the Principles of Natural Religion, and the Reason of the Thing itself. How possible soever therefore the Author's Hypothesis might be when apply'd to contingent Beings, whose Existence depends upon the good Pleasure and free Agency of God, yet 'tis plainly impossible and contradictory when apply'd to God himself as a necessary self-existent Being ; who exists not by any Will or Pleasure, but by Nature and Necessity : I say his Hypothesis here is plainly impossible and contradictory, because it supposes Essential Attributes and Perfections in God without any Necessity in the Nature of the Thing, and thereby destroys and nullifies all the natural Evidence for the Being and Existence of one God. Now whether this Writer will chuse to quit his own Hypothesis, or give up all the rational demonstrative Evidence for the Being and Existence of one God, I cannot tell, but I am fully and clearly persuaded that he must do one of them ; and since he has discarded the Principles of Reason and Natural Religion, it must doubtless be worth the Publicks while to see what Work he would next make with Scripture.

It may be worth some Notice here that our Author to give some Colour to his three Similar Powers, or three co-ordinate distinct Setts of all personal Attributes and Perfections

Perfections in GOD, pretends that there are in GOD and in every Person three distinct dissimilar Powers, which he distinguishes by the Power of Understanding, the Power of Willing, and the Power of Doing. That these Three are not one and the same but different Powers or Principles of Action he says he is *ready to demonstrate*; but he has luckily spared his *Demonstration*; and I am well assur'd that he had good Reason for it.

'Tis evident that what he calls the Power of *Understanding* in GOD, is no Power at all, nor has any Relation at all to *Action*. GOD's Infinite Understanding, or *Omniscience*, by which he knows all Things is not an Action but a necessary essential Attribute, or Property; and he might with as good Sense talk of the Power of *Existing*, as of the Power of *Understanding* in GOD.

'Tis I think farther evident that *Willing*, and *Doing*, are the same Thing in GOD, and indeed in every other Agent. Every Action must be an Act of the Will, or a particular Determination of the self-moving Power, nor is it possible to conceive of any other Action. But what the Author seems to aim at here, if he aims at any Thing is this, that different Acts suppose different Wills or Principles of Action in the same Agent, or that the Power and Principle of Action must be as different as the various Acts and Objects to which it is apply'd and determined; by which Rule and Way of Talking he might have found not only Three, but Three-Hundred,

Hundred, or if he had pleas'd an Infinite Number of different and distinct Wills, Powers, and Principles of Action in every particular Man. He might have distinguish'd for Instance between the Power of Thinking, the Power of Speaking, the Power of Writing, the Power of Walking, and the Power of Trifling, and the Power of being very conceited, and very impertinent. From hence 'tis plain that our Author's three dissimilar Powers, resolve themselves into one similar Power, *i. e.* into the one Principle of Action or the Will of the Agent. But to take him in his own Way there are in God Three Co-ordinate Similar Powers, under each of which are included Three dissimilar Powers of Understanding, Willing, and Doing. And thus according to this Hypothesis God is a Being endued in the whole with *Twelve Powers, Three similar Powers, and Nine dissimilar Ones.* And is not this a fine Way of talking concerning the Being and Essential Persons of God, and a likely Means of enlightening Peoples Understandings in the right Knowledge of God, and the Holy Scriptures? 'tis possible that I may not escape with this Writer and some of his zealous angry Friends, the Censure of Impiety and Prophaneness, only for exposing in him a most senseless Abuse of the Name and Attributes of God, which, however it may consist with Piety and a good Intention, cannot certainly consist with a *Zeal according to Knowledge.*

I cannot but here observe farther what appears to me very evident, that this Writer while he talks of the *Being, Unity, and Perfections*

Perfections of God, and labours to distinguish an individual intelligent *Being* from an individual *Person*, destroys the only Principle of Individuation, and has no Mark or Characteristick at all left of *different Being*. 'Tis plain that he all along abstracts the general Idea, or rather the general Name of *Being*, from all the Attributes, Properties, and Perfections of *Being*; and then he maintains that GOD is *one Being*, under that general confused Sense, or metaphysical Nonsense, in which all Beings are *one*, and there can be no possible Characteristick or any Mark of Distinction betwixt one *Being* and another. But is this all that the Scripture intends by the Unity of GOD, or by declaring that *God is one*, that he is one abstract metaphysical *Essence*, *Substance*, or *Substratum*? Does the *One God* signify nothing but an *Ens Rationis*, or a mere Creature of the Imagination?

HE who can persuade himself that the Names of GOD in Scripture which are so plainly *personal*, and so evidently Characteristical of one single individual *Agent*, or one Independent first *Cause*, he I say who can think that these Names stand only for one abstract metaphysical *Substance* or *Substratum*, must have an Understanding strangely turned to mistake plain Sense, and to run into eternal Darkness and Confusion. Doctor *Waterland* while he is speaking of the *Unity of God*, owns, that He has no Principle of Individuation in this Case, which he says is a Thing very much wanted. That is in plain English he understands nothing by the *Unity of God*, and has no Meaning to the

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Terms of this Proposition, *God is one*. And have not these Gentlemen brought the Cause of all Religion, and of Christianity in particular to a fine pass, while they have been disputing so long about the Unity of God 'till they have lost it, and are driven to confess that they mean nothing by it? When our Author shall please to let us know clearly and distinctly what he means by the Words, *Being, Substance, Person, and one God*, as he makes use of them in this Controversy it will soon appear that he is really a *Sabellian*, or a *Tritheist*, and that there can be no possible Orthodox Medium between these two; I mean according to the present Measure and Standard of Orthodoxy, tho' no Doubt but there is a true and scriptural Medium betwixt these two Extreams.

I shall make but one Remark more upon this Hypothesis, which is that it cannot at all serve to screen the Author from that popular Odium, which he endeavours with a little Art and a great deal of Malice to throw upon his Adversaries. His Invention cannot help him at all, but he must be still press'd with all those Difficulties which he thinks so very great and unsurmountable, and would represent as affecting only the contrary Scheme. Upon his own Principle, and in his own Hypothesis it must be true, that JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God, and the only Mediator betwixt God and Men, is, not only a subordinate derived Being, but a Creature, a very imperfect Creature, and a *meer Man*. Will he say contrary to so many clear and ex-

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press Texts that the Man JESUS of *Nazareth*, or the human Person born of the Virgin was not *Jesus Christ*, the Son of God, and the only Mediator betwixt God and Man? Will he say that the Man CHRIST was only Man in general, or an abstract human Nature but no particular real Man no human Person? Or will he pretend that the Man CHRIST or the human Person born of the Virgin, is personally the Supreme GOD, and even the second Co-ordinate similar Power in that imaginary metaphysical Being as it stands in his own Hypothesis? Let him shew how upon his own Hypothesis and Principles he can free himself from any of those Difficulties which he charges upon the *Arians* or even the *Socinians* themselves, and I shall then think him in good Earnest, and begin to look upon him as an Adversary worth disputing with. But if he cannot do this, as I am very sure he cannot, he must be obliged in Conscience solemnly to repent and humble himself in the Presence of GOD, and to ask Pardon of his Adversaries before the World, for his most gross and scandalous Abuse of them, as if they lessened the Glory and Dignity of *Jesus Christ*, the Son of God, and did not think as highly of him or even more highly and honourably than this Writer himself.

THE Pains which Mr. *Fancourt* and such Sort of Writers are at, to obscure, perplex, and render unintelligible the very first Principle of all Religion, concerning the Notion and Belief of *One God*, and the uncharitable Zeal they discover in unchurching and hereticating all those who cannot give
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into their dark inexplicable Schemes ; is what one cannot look upon but with a great deal of Surprize, and some Indignation.

THE *Unity of God* had been ever thought a Principle very plain and intelligible ; and obvious enough to the common Sense and Reason of Mankind, 'till certain Refiners upon *St. Paul* and the Scriptures took it into a System of *School-Divinity*, and then the *Christian Doctrines* by the Help of *Pagan Metaphysicks* were thrown all into Darkness and Confusion. The *Creed-Makers* found they had a profitable Trade, and gain'd much in lessening the Number of Candidates for Church Preferments, by turning the Articles of Faith into unintelligible inexplicable Mysteries, which none but *themselves* could understand or explain. In short he was thought the best Christian who understood the least of his own Faith, and it came at length to be look'd upon as a Point of Merit in a Man, stiffly to maintain, that the Christian Revelation is no Revelation at all, or that it reveals Things which cannot possibly be reveal'd because they are incomprehensible to human Understandings.

WHAT Pity is it our Author had not been at *Athens* with *St. Paul*, to have help'd him out while he was Preaching to those polite Heathens, and instructing them in the Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion, concerning the Personal Unity and Perfections of the *True God*, and the Personal Mediatorial Office of *Jesus Christ* ? The Apostle there while he professedly sets himself to rectify the *Athenians* Notions, by maintaining the personal Unity and absolute Su-

premacY of the True GOD, has so little of this School-Divinity, that one should be apt to think he did not understand it if our Author could no way demonstrate the contrary. But Mr. *Fancourt* had he been there present could have told the Apostle, that he was mistaken in the Representation he had there made of the one true GOD, that he had omitted a very necessary essential Point in his Description of GOD, and that the *Athenians* by his Account of the Matter could form no true Notion or Conception at all of the Unity and Perfections of GOD. Our Author could have told St. *Paul* that GOD was not an individual personal Agent or one Supreme Almighty Creator and Governor of the World, but a Triune Being; and that under the Notion of three personal Powers we must conceive a co-ordinate Triplicity of all Divine Attributes and Perfections in GOD, Three Understandings, Three Wills, &c. and, as far as can be understood upon the Principles of common Sense, three infinite co-ordinate Minds: For tho' he pretends to maintain a Unity of *Being*, yet 'tis plain that he abstracts the Idea or rather the general Name of *Being*, from all the actual and really existent Attributes and Properties and Perfections of *Being*; and so by *Being* can mean nothing but the abstract Idea of *Being* in general, as common to every Thing that really exists.

MR. *Fancourt* could likewise have informed St. *Paul* that JESUS CHRIST was not personally that MAN whom GOD had ordained to judge the World, of which he had given us Assurance

Assurance in raising him from the Dead; but that this Man Christ was himself personally the Supreme independent Creator of the Universe, whom the Athenians had ignorantly worshipped, and to whom they had all along inscrib'd their Altars as to the unknown God. He could have assured the Apostle that Jesus of Nazareth never was a human Person, that he had no real human Personal Existence, that his human Nature was no human Nature, or any Thing like human Nature, as having no real human Personality, and that if the one Supreme GOD himself who was the Person offended had not made Satisfaction for Sin, (i. e. If the Mediator had not been the Supreme GOD,) there could have been no sufficient Satisfaction made for Sin at all.

THESE and many other Things of equal Importance and Necessity, were St. Paul now living, our Author could acquaint him with and instruct him in, concerning which, as may reasonably be presumed the Apostle in his Time knew nothing at all: Thus are Men confounded with their own Inventions, and lost in the Wilds of their own Imaginations, when not content with the *pure uncorrupt Word of God*, they must needs be *wise above what is written*. While we call for plain Scripture, and require them to prove the Necessity of what they insist on from the Word of GOD, they continually put us off with their *own Consequences* instead of Scripture; in which Consequences when examined they are always so unhappy as to condemn themselves.

BUT

BUT I must remember that our Author is no common Adversary as being a very great and able Metaphysician, and really I know not what will become of me for provoking him thus far ; for if he should not be able to clear his Hypothesis from these and such like Objections, yet there is no Doubt but he will make it appear that he can still farther involve himself and his Subject, and talk more darkly and unintelligibly than ever. 'Tis possible therefore this may be the last Time I shall ever give my Readers any Trouble on Mr. *Fancourt's* Account, with whom I had never been concerned at all in any Controversy, had it not been for the Sake of his Superiors, whose Cause he undertook, I think without much Reason, and the World will now judge with what Success. 'Tis not unlikely but the Author will complain as usual, that I have misrepresented him and mistaken his true Sense. I can only say as to this that I have not willingly mistaken or misrepresented him, I have endeavour'd to understand him right, tho' indeed his Way of Thinking is so very odd and peculiar, that I can never expect fully to comprehend him ; And rather than mean any thing that is intelligible and refutable, I doubt not but he will chuse at length what has been the last Resort of other Learned Men, to *mean nothing at all.*

I speak not any Thing of this to discourage the Author from Writing again, and maintaining what he takes to be the Truth, in a Case which he apprehends of such vast Importance ; this doubtless he will

will look upon as his indispensable Duty, and tho' I may not perhaps be at Leisure myself, yet if he advances any thing of Consequence he need not doubt but some Body or other will take a proper Notice of him, and pay him all the Deference his Argument deserves. To conclude, If any should think that I have treated this Writer with too little Ceremony, I only desire they would read over his *Enthusiam retorted*, and if they can soberly and impartially think, that his Wit or Argument, his Equity and Justice, his Civility and Decency, his Candour, Charity, or Moderation deserve better Treatment, I will publicly ask his Pardon.

F I N I S.



will look upon as his independence. But, and
 the I may not perhaps be as I have
 said, if he advances any thing of Con-
 sideration he need not doubt but some
 day or other will take a proper interest
 in him, and say him of the Difference he
 has made. I am, however, if any
 Argument should be made, I have treated this Writ-
 ting with too little Ceremony, I only desire
 that you would read over his Answer, and
 send it to me, and I will be obliged to
 it. I think that his Writ on Argument, his
 Liberty and Justice, the Equity and Be-
 lief, his Liberty, of Moderation, I will give
 him his due.



M. V. W. 1. 2.



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